

Shedding Some Good Light on the CIA

By Jeremiah O'Leary

THE NIGHT WATCH: 25 Years of Peculiar Service, by David Alice Phillips. Atheneum, 309 pages, \$9.95.

This is the other side of the story about the Central Intelligence Agency, which, for the past several years, has been chastized with scorpions by both authors and a variety of investigative bodies.

Make no mistake, David Phillips, erstwhile chief of the Western Hemisphere Division of CIA and a 25-year veteran of what he calls "peculiar service," is on the counter-offensive in this well-written account of his personal experiences with the cloak-and-dagger. What gives Phillips credibility is his free acknowledgment of agency mistakes and even evil-doing on the level of assassination plots and mischief-making. But it is also persuasive that Phillips does not succumb to the shrillness of ex-agency employees like Victor Marchetti and Philip Agee, who have been in the forefront of CIA criticism.

Phillips resigned from the CIA when the investigations and denunciations were at a crescendo, not because he couldn't stand the heat, but so he would be free as a private citizen to speak out. He immediately founded an organization of former intelligence officers and has been on the podium and talk-show circuit ever since. The book is the culmination of his efforts and it is worthwhile to note that he has not imperiled the lives of any case officers or agents.

EVEN IF HE WAS NOT a partisan, Phillips' CIA career makes fascinating reading. He was a former

POW in Germany and sometime actor before he went to Chile as a private citizen to edit a small English-language newspaper. It was there that the CIA co-opted him to act as an agent (someone hired on parttime basis rather than an officer of the agency itself.) In the Chile of a quarter of a century ago, he began fumblingly to learn the tradecraft of espionage.

He did so well that the CIA also retained him to handle the propaganda broadcasts which contributed to the unseating of leftist President Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala. After that, he joined CIA as an official member of the intelligence agency and had a rapid rise. Phillips was in Cuba during the rise of Fidel Castro and he played an important role in the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961, running the clandestine radio station on Swan Island that was to call all Cuba to arms when the Brigade 2506 landed.

But Phillips believes the Bay of Pigs failed because the easy toppling of Arbenz had led the CIA to believe Castro would also fall like a ripe mango and because high leaders from President Kennedy to CIA headquarters vacillated and changed their plans.

IN 1963, PHILLIPS WAS in Mexico City when word came of President Kennedy's death. He writes that Lee Harvey Oswald's visits to the Soviet and Cuban embassies were known to

the agency but that Oswald was just another meaningless blip on the radar screen. The station did query Washington about who Oswald was, but the cable inquired about "Lee Henry Oswald. According to Phillips, the Cubans and Russians rebuffed Oswald as a kook and the story of Oswald receiving \$6,500 from a Cuban was "planted" by a Nicaraguan who hated Castro and hoped to provoke the U.S. into moving against Cuba in revenge for Kennedy's death.

Phillips writes that he knew nothing of the bizarre assassination plans cooked up at the agency against Castro, Lumumba and others and, in fact, played a key role when the U.S. State Department actually warned Castro in 1968 that he was the target of a Cuban exile plot against his life.

As to the complex role of the CIA in the troubled affairs of Chile, Phillips explains it this way: the agency was involved in the so-called Track I plan to prevent the ratification of Salvador Allende as president in 1970 by using up to \$250,000 to bribe Chilean congressmen and otherwise bring economic and diplomatic pressure to bear.

But Track II, which was designed to thwart Allende's election by any means, was an order passed to CIA Director Richard Helms by President Nixon in person and was to be carried out by the CIA itself without the knowledge of Secretary of State William Rogers, Ambassador Ed-

ward Korry or the mission in Santiago. As it happened, the CIA, according to Phillips, had nothing to do with the overthrow of Allende in 1973.

SOME OF THE things that have caused Phillips to question the ethics of CIA decisions, such as the CIA's action in the Dominican Republic in 1965. It caused his wife, Debbie, to exclaim, "I wish I could do for the CIA what you do for the CIA."

Phillips' book is about men and women who worked for the CIA. It will help other Americans to decide for themselves whether they want to work for an open society or a secret operation. It seems obvious: you want a society with rigid controls and only for gathering intelligence, not taking action on it.

This is no defense of the schemes for making Allende fall out with chemical warfare shot through the CIA. It is an explanation of the accountable CIA to the government to be held accountable for what other governments do. Although this is the one man, and a man of knowledge and respect, delineating what the CIA is capable of doing that can happen without the control of the CIA.